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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Reluctantly, I wish everyone a happy Labor Day weekend! I say reluctantly only because this weekend signifies the unofficial end of summer. True, it's only unofficial, but for many people, this weekend is for returning to school, and wrapping up all things pertaining to the summer months. It's almost like a 3-week mourning period until the summer really ends!

As I mentioned last week, things are starting to get back to "normal" as far as the magazine goes. I'm getting used to the new Windows 8.1 system (No, I haven't upgraded to Windows 10 yet!) and finding certain pieces of software that I was using to put the magazine together. I haven't received any negative feedback, so hopefully everyone is still able to get the magazine and access its contents again! If not, let me hear from you and we'll see what can be done better.

In the meantime, it's time to start planning the long holiday cookout schedule, and see what we need to have an enjoyable weekend. I hope that you all have a great weekend too, and remember to celebrate responsibly!

Until next time...

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FireBee Update News

by Fred Horvat

Last Saturday I went to the annual Atari Columbus Group's Swap Meet. I brought my FireBee, Raspberry Pi, and an old Macbook 15 Laptop with me. I connected the FireBee to a 15 LCD monitor, keyboard, and mouse I also brought with me. The goal was to introduce people to the FireBee who have never heard of it and to show it to people who have never seen it but were aware of it. The Raspberry Pi I had with me if someone wanted to see Aranym or Hatari in action on the Pi. The Laptop I Hatari and many different Aranaym builds that I created or downloaded.

Over the next 4 hours I had serious discussions with a few Atari and Computer enthusiasts about the FireBee. The most curious user was an Amiga user. He wanted to know as much as possible on the hardware. I had the FireBee Box with me that had all the specifications printed on the back and I even shut the machine off and took the cover off so he could see all the chips and workmanship that went into producing the machine. After that he wanted to know a lot more about FreeMiNT and plain TOS. I spent over 1 hour with this person discussing mostly Atari and FireBee hardware. Then the other people I spoke with had heard of the FireBee and were curious to see one in action. I had web sites saved to the SD card via the Save Function F3' in Netsurf web browser. I was able to call up web pages on the FireBee and they could see the speed and rendering capability of some familiar web sites in Netsurf and Highwire.

Besides answering questions on the FireBee many Atari Users were asking about FreeMiNT. All of them have heard of it but very few had given it a try or never had it successfully going years ago. Much similar to me. I tried a couple of times in the early 2000's but never was satisfied on what I had installed. So I showed them FreeMiNT on the FireBee but mostly the different Aranym builds I had on the laptop. I discussed with them all the different parts and if they wanted Unix capabilities we discussed SpareMiNT. I showed AFROS, NAES 2.0, and my EasyMiNT 1.80 builds. All but one user was interested in trying FreeMiNT in Aranym. The one person was interested in setting up his TT030 again and trying FreeMiNT. I suggested to all of them to download Aranym http://aranym.org/ and AFROS http://aranym.org/afros.html or the AFROS LiveCD http://aranym.org/livecd.html Then there is a very nice full Aranym build that has just about everything an Atari User would need to have a fully functioning system called EasyARAMiNT. https://sites.google.com/site/emaappsarch/news/finallythebetaishere I felt that these two pre-built systems would get someone a feel of Aranym and more importantly a feel of a modern Atari system running FreeMiNT. Lastly I suggested that if they felt comfortable after a while with these builds to create their own with EasyMiNT.
http://atari.st-katharina-apotheke.de/home.php?lang=en&headline=EasyMiNT&texte=easymint
With EasyMiNT they can customize the installation anyway they wanted. With or without SpareMiNT etc...

That's it for this week.

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain !
Sony To Launch Aqua Blue PS Vita!
Design Your Own Levels in 'Super Mario Maker'

And much, much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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## Sony To Launch Aqua Blue PS Vita in US on Nov. 6

At the GameStop Managers Conference held on Tuesday, Sony said that it will be launching a new and different shade - 'Aqua Blue' - for its PlayStation Vita handheld gaming console.

According to the new PS Vita color announcement made by Sony, the Aqua Blue model of PS Vita - which has been available only in 'Black' color since its 2012 launch - will hit the US markets on November 6. It will be priced at $200.

With regard to the availability of the new Aqua Blue PS Vita in the US, Sony said that the model will be available exclusively from GameStop.

Sony has also revealed that it is producing only a limited quantity of Aqua Blue PS Vita models; and that it does not plan to manufacture another batch of the shade once the initial stock runs out. As such, for customers who are sure that they want to go in for the Aqua Blue PS Vita while it is in stock, Sony has opened a pre-order portal.

Meanwhile, Sony is also, interestingly, pitching its PS Vita by highlighting the fact that the handheld is "home to more than 1,000 games and sports the ability to stream most PlayStation 4 games from your PS4 via Remote Play." The company also asserts that "with the recent launch of PlayStation Now on PS Vita and titles like Super Time Force Ultra, Super Meat Boy, and Minecraft: Story Mode making their way to PS Vita, it's the perfect time to pick up the system."

## Mortal Kombat X for PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 Canceled

The long-delayed PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions of Mortal Kombat X have finally been canceled by publisher Warner Bros. Interactive, according to a statement posted on the company's community forums.

The publisher cited quality reasons for the delay in its statement, which reads:

After months of development, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment has come to the regrettable conclusion that we cannot release Mortal Kombat X for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360. Please know our teams worked diligently to meet the quality standards set by the current-gen versions of the game. We were not able to get the PS3 and Xbox 360 versions to the quality expected

of a Mortal Kombat game and are very sorry for not being able to deliver the products as originally planned.

The PS3 and Xbox 360 versions were originally slated for release in April. The publisher later changed the game’s release window to summer, but the game was reportedly delayed to fall.

Mortal Kombat X was released for PlayStation 4, Windows PC and Xbox One on April 14. While NetherRealm Studios developed the current-generation console versions of the fighting game, the PC and previous-generation ports were handled by High Voltage Software.

## ’Uncharted 4’ To Launch on March 18

We now know when treasure hunter Nathan Drake will begin his first adventure for the PlayStation 4.

Publisher Sony confirmed the video game Uncharted 4: A Thief’s End will launch on March 18, 2016. Sony detailed the launch of arguably one of the company’s biggest video game properties in a post published Monday.

Multiple special editions will be available for players to pre-order, including a $120 collector’s edition including a premium statue of Nathan Drake.

A Thief’s End takes place three years after the conclusion of Uncharted 3: Drake’s Deception, with the franchise’s lead character enjoying retirement. However, he gets pulled back in to treasure hunting by his brother Sam.

## Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain  Is a Fantastic Finale

Roughly 15 minutes have passed since I touched down near a remote Soviet outpost in the wilds of Afghanistan. In that time, I ve cultivated herbs, stolen a Russian transport truck, shot a half-dozen soldiers with tranquilizer darts, ridden a horse, fired an antiaircraft gun, and stuffed an unconscious man into a porta-potty. That last part was just for fun.

This is Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain in all its wonderfully over-the-top glory. The Phantom Pain is the latest and, according to series creator Hideo Kojima, the last in the long-running Metal Gear Solid franchise. Kojima has made similar claims following the release of previous Metal Gear games, but considering the epic falling out between the legendary designer and series publisher Konami, he might be right.

And that s just fine, because out of the many excellent games in the Metal Gear series, The Phantom Pain is perhaps the finest.

In true Metal Gear fashion, The Phantom Pain is equal parts stealth gameplay, political intrigue, and ham-fisted drama. If

you ve never played one of these games, you ll want to spend a few hours perusing Wikipedia to catch up on the series incredibly convoluted backstory.

The Phantom Pain follows the tale of the Kiefer Sutherland-voiced mercenary Snake (aka Punished Snake, aka Venom Snake, aka Big Boss  told you it was convoluted) as he and his comrades in the private military organization Diamond Dogs seek vengeance against the shadowy government organization Cypher. You accomplish this by using a mix of stealth and action across multiple locales. Even Snake s favorite stealth tool, the cardboard box, is here.

The story takes plenty of insane turns, but compared to other Metal Gear Solid games, there are fewer plodding, lengthy cut-scenes. The plot takes a backseat to the gameplay  and in this case, that s a very good thing.

That s because The Phantom Pain is the first open-world Metal Gear game. Whereas previous Metal Gears shuttled you down relatively linear paths, The Phantom Pain tosses you into large, beautiful sandboxes. You can steal an enemy jeep and drive from one part of the map to the other, exploring run down villages and Soviet checkpoints and generally making a mess of the place at your leisure.

That openness also affects how you approach your missions. Want to run in like Rambo, guns blazing, firing your entire ammo belt? Go right ahead. Want to stick to the shadows and stealthily sneak into a facility? You can do that, too. It s probably smarter.

You can destroy a base s communications equipment to prevent soldiers from calling in reinforcements. Or wait for nightfall yep, there s a real day/night cycle  and cut the lights to a building so you can easily sneak by enemies. If you take the stealth route, you can take down guys using close-quarters combat (CQC) or your trusty tranquilizer gun or sneak up behind them and put them in a headlock. Once they re in your grasp, you can either interrogate your captives, knock them out, or send them the way of Old Yeller.

Adding to The Phantom Pain s open-world ambitions are two new mechanics: the Phantom Cigar and Reflex mode. The Phantom Cigar is a cigar that you equip to speed up time. This beefy spliff comes in handy when you want to quickly change the day/night cycle without having to wait around. It s a Metal Gear blunt a  rest  mechanic with a dank twist  and it s a perfect representation of how adept Kojima and Co. are at turning a pretty straightforward feature into something ridiculous.

Reflex mode, meanwhile, provides you with an extra few seconds to react when a guard spots you. When active, Reflex mode lets you either dispatch your enemy via deadly force or take them down with a choke or CQC. Guards taken down while you re in Reflex mode don t alert their comrades.

In general, The Phantom Pain s controls are tight and satisfying, which is important when moving so much as a millimeter in the wrong direction can mean the difference between successfully navigating past a guard and taking a machine

gun to the face.

The one bugaboo I have with the game s controls has to do with its cover system. Ideally, this lets you automatically stand flush against a wall when you walk up to it. This way you can easily move up and down hallways and peek around corners without getting spotted. Unfortunately, the mechanic is pretty touch-and-go. Sometimes you ll lean against the wall; sometimes you ll just stand next to it like an idiot.

The battle on the ground is just one part of the game, however. The Phantom Pain also includes a rather in-depth base building mechanic. A former oil rig dubbed Mother Base serves as a safe haven for you and the Diamond Dogs, allowing you to research upgrades (BETTER CARDBOARD BOXES!), new weapons, and launch missions. To pay for upgrades, you ll need to complete story and side missions as well as collect resources scattered about the world. Usually, they ll be in enemy bases, but occasionally you ll find gems lying out in the open, ripe for the taking.

A base is only as good as the soldiers manning it, and from the outset you re pretty shorthanded. To grow your ranks, you can capture enemy soldiers on the battlefield and send them to your base. How? By strapping them to a balloon, naturally. The Fulton Surface-to-Air recovery system shoots unconscious soldiers into the sky and, weather permitting, deposits them safely on Mother Base. You can do this with all sorts of things, too, from large items to I am not making this up bears. Because you never know when you might need a bear.

Yes, it s silly, and, no, it doesn t make any sense. But that s what makes the Fulton perfectly Metal Gear. The series has always toyed with crazy sci-fi conceits; using gigantic balloons to ship stuff back to your home base is par for the course.

It s also one of the best-looking games around. Afghanistan s rocky landscapes are meticulously detailed, and the characters, as always, look incredible. Kiefer Sutherland does an admirable job voicing Snake, who for decades was voiced by series mainstay David Hayter. Those are big shoes to fill, but Sutherland handles it well.

Few games are this ambitious, and even fewer manage to integrate so many different gameplay styles so smoothly. From the off-the-rails exploration to the overwrought dialogue, quirky villains, and men locked in porta-potties, Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain is the perfect expression of creator Hideo Kojima s vision for his beloved franchise and a fitting end to his time at the helm. But more than that, it s just plain fun. Don t miss it.

## Design Your Own Levels in ’Super Mario Maker’

Crowds don’t always have the most positive connotation.

You’ve got your mobs, your rabbles, even your riots. Once in a while, though, you get a group of folks coming together for the

common good. That’s exactly what Nintendo has managed to organize with the release of Super Mario Maker for the Wii U.

For non-gamers or those who’ve been living under a POW block, Super Mario Maker is a Mario level creator at its core. Interestingly, it was originally born as a tool for Nintendo’s crackshot staff of designers to streamline stage creation for its popular platforming franchise Super Mario Bros.

Like free speech, elections and the Interwebs, however, some ideas are best realized when you get a large number of people involved, and it’s this democratization of sorts that truly makes a level creator tool like Super Mario Maker realize its full potential. Take it from someone who remembers what life was like before the Internet was around and folks were pretty much isolated in their own little corners of the world.

At the heart of Super Mario Maker is a collection of tools designed to tap into the inner creativity of folks. Admittedly, it can be quite intimidating at first, but the game does a good job of easing aspiring designers into it. One way it does this is by limiting access to all the tools until you’ve spent time playing around with the level creation options you have available. Eventually, you’ll be able to unlock everything after a few days.

One of the neat things about the level creator is how you can toggle between the look of the original Super Mario Bros., Super Mario Bros. 3, Super Mario World and the 2.5D New Super Mario Bros. Nintendo’s decision to include all these styles as opposed to doing them one by one and spreading them across multiple game releases is good news for gamers and their wallets. Super Mario Maker also throws in a bunch of extra elements that weren’t present in the previous games. You can now bring in doors or giant Goombas in a classic Super Mario Bros. level that uses the look of the original game, for example. You can also let folks play as other classic Nintendo characters or even foes such as a Goomba. This allows players to create more fresh experiences for even veteran players on top of the fact that they’re playing a new level.

Besides the new stuff, however, a key strength of Super Mario Maker lies in the old, and by that I mean the rock solid controls of the Mario series. Whether you’re playing a classic looking level or a New Super Mario Bros. stage, controlling your character just feels right and has that classic feel that Mario players know and love. You’ll need those excellent controls, too, as some of the community-created stages that you’ll run into can be quite brutal. See, in addition to uploading your own creations, you can also try out the levels designed by other players, which is one of the best parts of the game.

I must say that I’m incredibly amazed with some of the stages created by other players. Whether it be a stage that lets you chain jump on top of a bazillion goombas, creative fights with Bowser and Bowser Jr., or a level that requires you to run alongside a giant shell to trigger a cool bulldozing combo, the creativity demonstrated by the Mario Maker community can be astounding. In fact, they make me as jelly as Wendy Testaburger because I know I can never make stages that are just as cool.

Also, while there may be difficult levels in there, none of them are impossible as level creators are required to finish their own creations before they can upload them. If you do find a creator whose work you really like, you can follow them so you can be updated every time they upload a new level. Rounding out the list of features is Amiibo functionality for unlocking various costumes or, in the case of the 30th Anniversary Mario figure, a Big Mushroom powerup.

Admittedly, getting your creations noticed among a slew of uploaded creations can be a challenge. The fact that you don't have all tools accessible to you right off the bat also will be a bummer for folks who want to fully get into the level creating action right away without having to wait a few days to do so. Also, while the game comes with extra baked-in modes such as the 100 Mario Challenge, I wish that it also came with a full-fledged campaign.

Despite its issues, however, Super Mario Maker remains an enjoyable title that makes the Mario world your oyster, er, Koopa shell. Whether it be the game's ability to nurture your inner level creator or inspire future game designers, Super Mario Maker is a great example of the potential that lies in tapping the power of the crowd. Even if you're terribad at stage design, being able to enjoy the crazy creations of other folks makes it worth the prize of admission. Now how about a Super Mario RPG Maker, Nintendo?

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Here s Why Atari Fans Just Spent $100,000 on Video Games From A Dump

Jason Baldwin remembers playing E.T. The Extra Terrestrial on his Atari when he was growing up in Alamogordo, N.M.: It was awful. Not an hour after he started playing, he gave up on it.

Years later, he heard rumors that the game was so bad that Atari trashed thousands and thousands of cartridges in his home town, a city of 31,000 in southwest New Mexico. Turns out, the rumors weren t far off. Hundreds of thousands of games not just E.T. were buried in the city landfill in the company s waning years.

The massive cache of video game detritus has made for a payday in Alamogordo. A crew dug up a sliver of the massive collection, and the city auctioned about 900 games one by one to amass a tidy sum just under $108,000, more than $120 apiece.

I didn t think they would fetch as much as they did, said Baldwin, now a city commissioner in Alamogordo. I believe my

fellow city commissioners thought if we sold $5,000 worth or $10,000 worth, we could make some improvements to the dump area and maybe put up a little plaque or something.

Now, Susie Galea, Alamogordo s mayor, says the town will likely use some of the proceeds to build a memorial to what she calls the  myth of Atari s tomb.

The games weren t worth all that much in their own right, Rick Weis, who has collected some 2,000 cartridges for Atari 2600 games, said in an e-mail. They re fairly common titles, most worth $5 or so.

But the cartridges ballooned in value as collectors clamored for a piece of a video game myth, a tangible and smelly slice of history representing an industry giant s downfall.

The legend goes like this: The game was so bad that it led to Atari s downfall in 1983   so bad that the company cut its losses and buried millions of cartridges in the desert. And not just any desert: Alamogordo is where Ham, the first chimp to go to space, was buried. Roswell, N.M., is a two-hour drive to the east, and the Trinity Site, where atomic bombs were tested, is two hours north.

The reality isn t filled with so much intrigue: In 1983, Atari was stumbling and started looking to get rid of surplus. As Galea, the mayor, tells it, Atari had a warehouse in nearby El Paso, Tex., and Alamogordo s dump had lax environmental rules. The disposal wasn t much of a secret: Researchers say it was noted in newspaper articles at the time.

But nostalgia and fandom swirled around last year s project to excavate the games. Andrew Reinhard, an archaeologist on the project who runs the Web site Archaeogaming.com, said he watched  E.T.  games that were listed online for $2 the morning of the dig go for $10 later in the day. Months later, a cartridge from the landfill sold for more than $1,500.

 Collectors find value that you and I would maybe raise our eyebrows about. Collectors find value in things that we may devalue,  said Raiford Guins, a Stony Brook University professor who studies video game history and has researched the landfill. In those circles, he said, the landfill games have become  the holy grail for Atari collectors.

The history of the cartridges pulled from the dump   of the urban legend surrounding them, if not the games themselves justifies the steep price they command, Weis said.

He owns just about every game made for the Atari 2600, but still shelled out for a copy of  Centipede,  a game that usually sells for a fraction of the $70 he paid.

 Even if it’s not the famous  E.T.  burial, it will still be very historic for our community,  Weis said.  I wanted a small piece of it.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

## U.S. Said To Draft Potential Sanctions Over China Cyber Hacking

The Obama administration is drafting an escalating series of actions, including economic sanctions and curbs on doing business in the U.S., to punish China and other nations that persist in hacking its corporate computer networks, according to two administration officials with knowledge of the planning.

The measures have not yet been decided, the officials said, and the administration is moving cautiously as actions being considered include cyber retaliation, which could reveal information about U.S. government and private cyber security capabilities. It could also trigger further online or commercial warfare that would be difficult to contain.

The actions under consideration wouldn t be targeted solely at China, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations and classified information. The moves were first reported by the Washington Post.

While the U.S. believes that China is by far the most pervasive and persistent hacker, Russian cyber spies and criminals are generally more sophisticated and have stepped up their actions, especially against U.S. financial institutions, amid tensions over Russia s actions in Ukraine.

The administration is also conscious of China s place as America s second-largest trading partner, a major holder of U.S. Treasuries and an important player in policies toward North Korea and Iran, one of the officials said. The discussions come at a particularly sensitive time, given President Xi Jinping s visit to the U.S. next month, when he will meet with President Barack Obama.

Still, both officials said Chinese theft of U.S. trade and commercial data has increased despite a series of diplomatic warnings, so officials see no alternative to considering economic sanctions.

One of the officials said other, classified retaliatory actions by the National Security Agency are being considered and some have been taken to punish China for hacking into U.S. government databases. They said intelligence officials believe China is seeking to expose undercover American officers and find information to blackmail or bribe officials with access to classified information to provide it to China.

There is widespread concern in the Central Intelligence Agency s

Directorate of Operations, the spy corps, that officers  private health, marital, financial and other information may have fallen into Chinese hands, said one undercover officer, who also asked not to identified given the sensitivity of the information.

The timing of any move is being debated, the officials said, with diplomats and others arguing that making any kind of announcement or imposing any retaliatory sanctions in advance of Xi s visit could cause unwarranted damage to ties. Some officials have argued that Obama should warn Xi privately of what will happen if the hacking continues but hold off taking any action to see if China responds.

Such sanctions are already authorized by an executive order that Obama signed in April, the officials said. It calls  malicious cyber-enabled activities  a national emergency and authorizes the Treasury Department to take action against individuals, companies and other entities that engage in it. In announcing it, one of the officials said, Obama noted that such attacks can originate  from a range of sources,  underscoring the possible breadth of the retaliatory actions being debated.

The actions that could trigger retaliation would have to meet a threshold of damage that s still being debated, the officials said, but high on the list will be impacting the U.S. financial or energy infrastructure, a concern triggered by a destructive hack of Sony Pictures that the U.S. said was carried out by North Korea, and other intrusions into U.S. electric grids and pipelines.

## Microsoft Word Intruder Revealed

Start thinking back, and bring to mind the big "Malware In The Media" stories of the last few years.

What did you come up with?

We let our minds go to town.

We visualised hyberbolic headlines like RANSOMWARE RAVAGES BRITAIN and AMERICA UNDER ATTACK BY STATE-SPONSORED HACKERS.

In particular, our first thoughts were of two rather different sorts of cyberattack, committed by two very different sorts of operator:

Malware that aims far and wide in order to make as much money for the crooks as quickly as possible. All publicity welcome, especially if it convinces people that paying up actually works. Example: CryptoLocker.

Malware targeted for a very specific purpose, such as industrial or political espionage. Publicity unwelcome, because the aim is to lie hidden until the bullseye is hit. Example: Stuxnet.

There are certainly plenty of defensive lessons to learn from each of these examples.

But there’s a fascinating middle ground, where cybercrooks from the first group are quietly adopting the more subtle approach of the so-called Advanced Persistent Threatsters of the second group.

And SophosLabs researcher Gabor Szappanos has just published a paper looking into this phenomenon.

Szappi, as we usually refer to him here, is popular with Naked Security readers with good reason: his papers are always both interesting and informative, worthwhile not only for lay readers but also for the more technical audience.

The paper is entitled Microsoft Word Intruder Revealed, and it digs into a rather special facet of cybercrime: the malware construction kit.

As the name suggests, Microsoft Word Intruder (MWI) focuses on sneaking malware onto your computer using booby-trapped Word files, rather than by using treacherous web links you have to click, or by embedding malicious Flash objects into poisoned online ads.

As Szappi explains in the paper, the creator of MWI is effectively offering an exploits-as-you-need-them malware creation service that "deskills" the Remote Code Execution (RCE) part of malware distribution.

You no longer need to know how to exploit Word yourself.

For a modest fee, you can have your malware packaged into personalised booby-trapped documents that you can email out to prospective victims.

However, there are terms and conditions!

Objekt, the Russian operator of MWI, requires his customers to tread softly.

You can deliver any sort of malware you like, but you have to agree not to do massive spam runs or to draw unnecessary attention to yourself.

In short, to buy into MWI you need to take the more subtle approach of the targeted attacker, even if your goal is to make money from anyone and everyone rather than to breach one specific target.

Has this fusion approach worked?

Szappi’s detailed research suggests that it has.

He found that MWI’s niche market has helped dozens of cybercrime groups to deliver many hundreds of different malware samples from numerous different malware families covering most major malware types.

Banking Trojans, bots, remote access tools: MWI has packaged and delivered them all, without drawing much attention to

itself.

As Szappi concludes:

> Even though the Microsoft Word Intruder kit is advertised for targeted attacks, which are usually associated with nation-state intrusions or other focused surveillance operations, it seems that its primary users are money-making cybercriminals aiming for smaller, less obvious, malware campaigns.
>
> It seems that some cybergangs are learning that less really can be more.

Microsoft Word Intruder Revealed is not just a fascinating and well-organised paper, it also gives you some solid advice on real-world precautions you can take.

A well-recommended read.

## Secret Service Agent Pleads Guilty To Stealing Silk Road Bitcoins

A former Secret Service special agent yesterday pleaded guilty to diverting $800,000 worth of bitcoins into his own account during an investigation into online black market site Silk Road.

Appearing in a San Francisco federal court, Shaun Bridges also admitted money laundering and obstruction of justice charges.

Computer forensics expert Bridges belonged to the Baltimore Silk Road task force, a group formed to track down Ross Ulbricht, the mastermind behind the online drug bazaar.

As part of that operation, the site's administrator - Curtis Green - was arrested in January 2013.

Using Green's credentials, Bridges logged into the back end of the Silk Road site and began locking drug dealers out of their accounts, swiping 20,000 of their bitcoins along the way - an act that would later lead Ulbricht to hire a contract killer to eliminate Green, who he believed was responsible for the theft.

Bridges then diverted the virtual currency - worth around $350,000 at the time - into an account under his control at the now-defunct Mt. Gox.

At some point between March and May 2013, Bridges moved the money - by then worth around $820,000 - into a Fidelity account called Quantum International Investments LLC.

Bridges' plea agreement brought to light how he obstructed the investigation of Ulbricht and Silk Road through his takeover of Green's administrator account. He also impeded investigations into his own wrongdoing by making several false or misleading statements. The court also heard how Bridges had encouraged another government employee to lie on his behalf.

Following the hearing, Attorney Haag said:

> We depend on those in federal law enforcement having the highest integrity and unshakeable honor, and Mr. Bridges has demonstrated that he utterly lacks those qualities.

Bridges will return to court on 7 December for sentencing. Both the money laundering and obstruction charges carry a maximum term of 20 years in jail.

Though he has been released on bail, Ars Technica reports that Bridges has been blocked from changing his name or other personal details after Judge Richard Seeborg heard he may be a flight risk.

Prosecutor Katherine Haun told the court how he had been trying to change his name and social security number, an act explained away by the defence who claimed that was in response to concerns over identity theft in the wake of the OPM data breach.

Bridges is not the only federal agent to be accused of illegal activity during the Silk Road investigation.

Carl M. Force of the DEA, who was also tasked with investigating Ulbricht, recently pleaded guilty to charges of stealing bitcoins, money laundering and extortion. He admitted using numerous aliases in an attempt to sell information about the investigation to the man known as Dread Pirate Roberts.

Force also attempted to extract $250,000 from Ulbricht after he erroneously concluded that he had learned of his true identity. He even attempted to form a partnership with Mark Karpeles, the former CEO of Mt. Gox.

Force will be sentenced in October and he too faces a jail term of up to 20 years in relation to the money laundering charge - he has also begun to pay restitution of $500,000.

In a comment that could be attributed to Force just as much as Bridges, Assistant Attorney General Caldwell said yesterday:

> There is a bright line between enforcing the law and breaking it. Law enforcement officers who cross that line not only harm their immediate victims but also betray the public trust. This case shows we will act quickly to hold wrongdoers accountable, no matter who they are.

However the sentencing hearings go, neither of the ex-agents will remain behind bars for as long as Ulbricht himself who, in May 2015, was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

## Man Arrested After Posting Facebook Videos of Him Tampering With Traffic Cameras

Have you ever wished that hackers would find a way to attack the massive license plate reader databases that the

government’s tracking us with?

dell, one guy has figured out how to unleash a denial-of-service (DoS) on the cameras, though it’s not exactly hat you’d call "distributed".

Rather, Long Island, New York resident Stephen Ruth has come up with a very localized attack.

It involves a long pole and a couple of balls. And yes, you can take that multiple ways.

Stick a ball on the end of your pole, reach up and poke that camera so it’s pointing to the sky, and badda bing, badda boom: you just saved taxpayers $10,000.

Well, that’s how much Ruth estimated that he saved people.

Two videos - one posted on 21 August, one on 23 August - show Ruth using a selfie stick to record himself as he uses a painter s pole to push the red light camera s face skyward.

His rationale, as he said in one of the viral videos:

> This camera has gotten me numerous times for not waiting 3 seconds. Who’s to say that I need to wait 3 seconds after I clearly see that there’s no one coming in my direction?

That video had been viewed 304,637 times as of Friday morning.

Yes, that’s right - another criminal who posted evidence of his crime on Facebook.

And then bragged about it. On Facebook.

Make no mistake, this guy’s no dim bulb. Ruth knew he would get caught, and he doesn’t care.

Police told local news channel PIX11 that they got wind of the videos and found that Ruth had allegedly tampered with four cameras in Suffolk County, near the Long Island Expressway Service Roads at Hawkins Avenue and near Ocean Avenue.

He’s doing it for the little guys, he said - the people whom New York is bleeding with high taxes.

Here’s what Ruth posted on Facebook on Wednesday:

> To all the people thinking "why would he do that? Didn’t he think he was going to get arrested?" Of course I knew I would be arrested. I did it for the people who come back from war and get abused by these cameras. I did it because senior citizens are getting these, the same ones that went to war for us. These same seniors live in New York’s high cost environment and are being forced out of New York because of its high taxes.
>
> I also did it because every vehicle that you see with an out of state license plate is not receiving these tickets regardless of who they are. These same people live in our state and pay lower insurance rates because their cars are registered

out of state under someone else’s name.

Ruth was in custody at the 6th Precinct in Selden, Long Island as of Tuesday night, due to appear in court on Wednesday on four counts of criminal tampering.

## Intel’s New Processors Bring ’Most Significant Advancements in Computing’

Intel’s latest generation processors - codenamed Skylake - will deliver incredible performance gains, better battery life, superlative graphics and the scope for PC makers to start getting creative in terms of new shapes and form factors when they start appearing in devices later this year.

Computer sales may be slowing down overall, but there is clearly demand for mobile PCs, especially ultrabooks, hybrids and 2-in-1 devices -- computers that are proving popular enough to start stealing sales from tablets.

But whatever PC you next decide to next purchase, chances are that whatever its brand, from Acer to Apple, it will have an Intel chip inside running the show, meaning that every time it upgrades its chips, everyone benefits.

And with its new sixth-generation  Skylake’ processors, revealed on Wednesday ahead of the official start of this year’s IFA in Berlin, Germany, the benefits are potentially huge.

"Sixth Gen Intel Core processors deliver some of the most significant advancements in computing that we’ve ever seen," said Kirk Skaugen, Intel senior vice president and general manager of the Client Computing Group. "[They] are more responsive than ever with enhanced performance, battery life and security. And they can enable amazing new PC experiences like logging into your computer with your face and having a personal assistant respond to your voice."

Despite its leadership position, it has taken Intel time to bring its processors in line with consumers’ evolving PC-based needs. But now that it has caught up, it’s not resting on its laurels.

Nearly half of the computers in use around the world today (500 million+) are between four and five years old and compared with any of them, Skylake-powered PCs will feel like a quantum leap forward. They offer a 3000% improvement on graphics (when compared to Intel’s best processor architecture from 2010), over twice as much performance, and, in notebooks and other mobile devices, the possibility of all-day battery life.

And of course, they will be the first chips from the company truly optimized for Windows 10’s most processor-hungry and complex features.

However, the chips have also been created in a way that will let manufacturers get creative with product design as well as

software, meaning that 2016 will be a year in which lightweight devices get lighter still and streamline notebooks and tablets can get even thinner without impacting on heat diffusion and performance.

"The combination of 6th Gen Intel Core processors, Windows 10 and beautiful new systems from PC manufacturers make this the best time ever to buy a new computer," said Skaugen.

A Much-needed Chrome Update Will Save More Battery and Memory

The Google Chrome browser has received a lot of flak for its sluggish, battery-draining performance, but it seems like Google may have a remedy.

Google announced Chrome 45, an update designed increase speed and save battery life, on Friday in a blog post. This is the latest in a series of improvements designed to make Chrome run more smoothly, especially on laptops.

In May, an extension called The Great Suspender, which automatically suspends unused (and memory-hogging) tabs in Chrome, found a place in our browsers and our hearts. After a certain user-specified time, unused tabs would get suspended until clicked on again, a huge improvement to Chrome.

Now, Google seems to be taking a page or two from The Great Suspender. When restoring tabs after closing Chrome, it will load the most viewed tabs first, so you can access what you're looking for more quickly. It can even halt tabs from restoring if your computer's memory is taxed.

Chrome will also be able to detect if tabs aren't being used and free up unused resources for tabs that need them. Google says that this can save 10% of memory on average, with Gmail and other memory-intensive web applications saving up to nearly 25%.

These are welcome additions for anyone, but especially those who use Mac laptops. With the update, expect a healthy jump in performance and battery life.

To activate the update, open Chrome's Settings, click "about" and follow the on-screen prompts. Your browser will restart with the update activated.

Google says that more performance and efficiency-related Chrome updates are in the pipeline.

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